

Robb Report

The 17 Best Bottles of Premium Vodka to Buy Right Now

From reliable old standbys to a celeb-backed spirit sold inside a skull.



Although vodka has been with us ever since the 12th century, when it was first distilled in Russia by Viatka monks, it wasn't until 1951 that the United States government finally recognized it as a separate spirit. Even then, this clear elixir that forms the base for some of today's most popular cocktails was given short shrift by being stoically defined as "...neutral spirits so distilled or so treated after distillation with charcoal or other materials, as to be without distinctive character, aroma, taste, or color."

But more recently—on May 4, 2020, to be precise—the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) finally acknowledged the craft movement of the 20th and 21st centuries by declaring that old definition of vodka as passé. The new definition gives vodka the right to have a "distinctive character," although it cannot be aged in wooden barrels.

Kástra Elión Greek Vodka



This is not just the only Greek vodka in our roundup, it is the only vodka that has been column distilled six times with handpicked Greek olives. After being fermented with grain and mixed with mineral water from Mt. Taygetos on the Peloponnese peninsula in southern Greece, this carefully nurtured spirit is rested in stainless steel vats for sixty days. It is then bottled—without filtration—in handsome porcelain-like glass decanters worthy of a family produced, artisanal spirit. The medium weight flavor is slightly spicy and possesses a faint brininess, no doubt due to the high quality of the olives that are used, which come from Nafpaktos, the hometown of one of the vodka’s co-founders.